

Roving dentist leaves smiles in wake as clinic sets out for Philippines

By JoAnn Jacobsen-Wells
Deseret News medical writer

Many of Salt Lake's homeless are now all smiles after meeting "Dr. Ralph."

Ralph Montgomery, a Murray dentist on his way to the remote Philippine island of Palawan, stopped off at the St. Vincent De Paul Center for what he termed a "trial run."

Montgomery and his colleagues are at the center through Friday working out the bugs of a new custom-built, 30-foot mobile dental clinic that will be presented to the Palawan Dental Society Jan. 16.

The \$500,000 educational vehicle is a gift from Rotary International. It is equipped with two built-in dental chairs and support units, X-ray, refrigerators and medical examination table.

Once the self-contained vehicle arrives in the Philippines, the comprehensive project will work like this: American dentists will contribute 30 days every other month on Palawan, working side-by-side with native dentists who will be trained in modern techniques and the use of X-ray equipment. The local dentists will receive additional instruction from a video dental correspondence-type program developed by Loma Linda School of Dental Medicine under Montgomery's direction.

During the Americans' off-months, the participating Palawan dentists can use the clinic to treat their own patients — as long as 50 percent of their time is spent serving the poor.

The idea for the model clinic was conceived by Montgomery after he had practiced on Palawan as a Rotary Club volunteer for two 30-day time periods in 1985 and 1987. The island is one of the least-

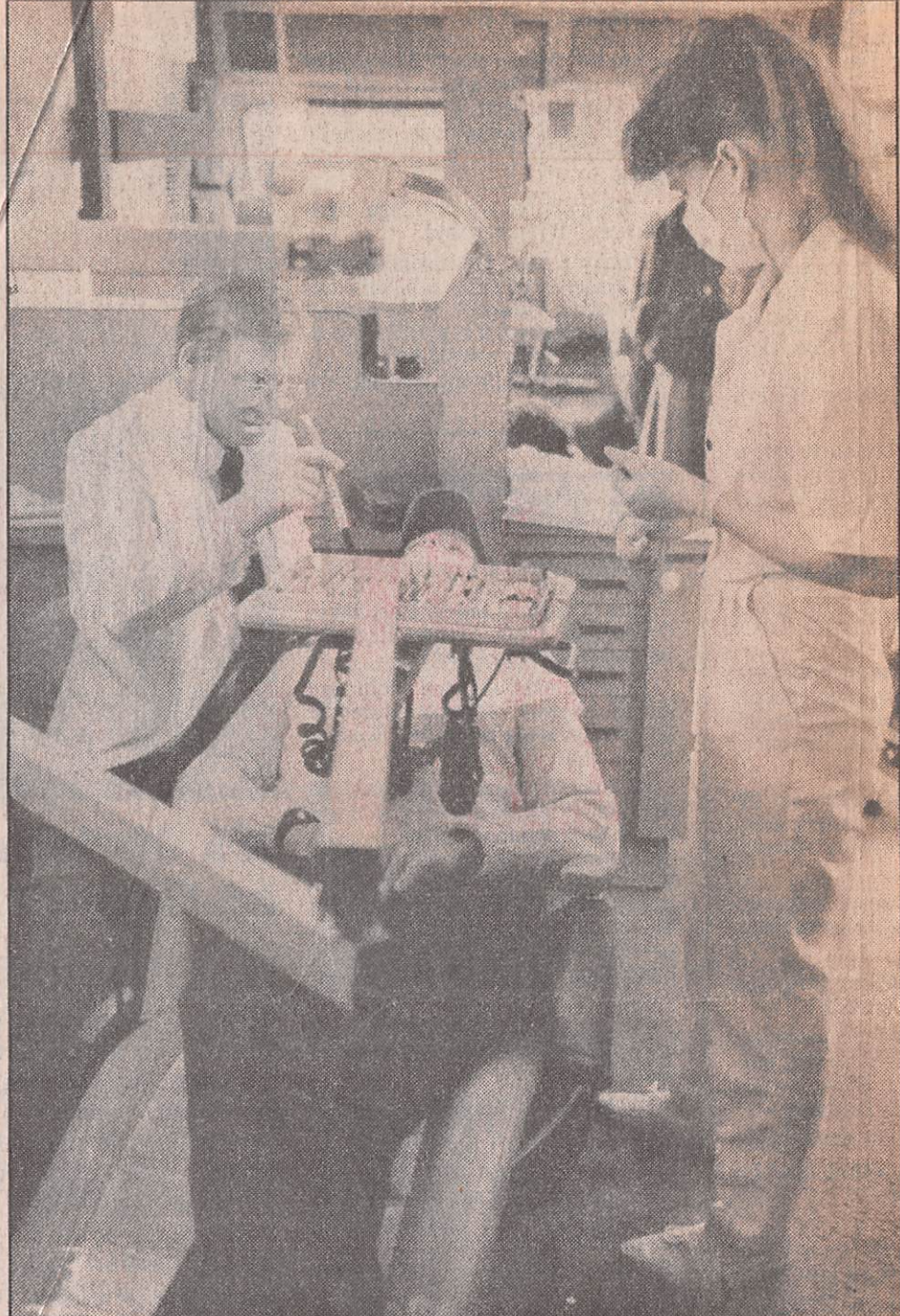


Dr. Ralph Montgomery and assistant Laura Etroni put mobile dental clinic to the test at St. Vincent De Paul Center before its sent to the Philippines to help in training dentists and aiding the homeless.

PHOTOGRAPHY/ DON GRAYSTON

But he couldn't solve the island's dental problems alone.

Thus, the idea of the mobile van emerged — an idea that gained immediate financial support from Rotary International.



tioning the way it should," Montgomery said. "It's a good thing we found these little things here instead of in Palawan. We couldn't go downtown there and find what we need."

The homeless, like the Filipinos, have reduced self-esteem when their teeth are deteriorating.

To provide continual help to the homeless, Montgomery donated equipment in

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wrote for the proposed BL4 facility could merely be updated and released in final form with more information about BL3 options, or whether the EIS process needs to begin again.

"We don't have a firm legal decision yet," Whitaker said.

Erickson said Downwinders feel that because the Army is significantly changing the scope of the project it once proposed, a new EIS is needed. "We think it should be fully rewritten and that public hearings are essential."

CLOSURE

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Payson, Charter Canyon Hospital in Orem and Utah Valley Regional Medical Center in Provo.

Nine patients — three adults and six adolescents — being treated at Riverwood were relocated Tuesday to Mountain View.

Michael Graham, administrator at Mountain View, said the hospital was asked to accommodate the patients because the physicians who admitted them to Riverwood also have practice privileges at Mountain View, and the hospital's psychiatric unit can provide the same treatment the patients had been receiving at Riverwood.

Two additional employees have been added to the psychiatric unit at Mountain View.

Riverwood Hospital was opened three years ago by Healthcare Services of America. A majority interest in HSA was bought by Ramsey one year ago. In the past year Ramsey has sold three free-standing chemical-dependency centers and a 50-bed psychiatric hospital, in Idaho Falls, as part of its consolidation efforts.



PHOTOGRAPHY/ GERALD SILVER

It's Christmas on Capitol Hill

With a flick of a switch, Gov. Norm Bangerter lit more than 4,000 white lights adorning a 32-foot blue spruce Christmas tree this week, signaling the start of the holiday season on Capitol Hill. Enhancing the traditional lighting celebration were the Sunshine Generation, right, a singing group of orange-and-yellow-clad children. Several school singing groups will perform public



cluding an X-ray machine and a sterilizer, that are too heavy and large for the mobile unit.
His hope is that a local Rotary Club will provide funding to upgrade the center's clinic.

The trial run also benefited dozens of homeless who received free and essential dental care, including new silver fillings and bonded composites. "One man was tickled to death that he could walk out and be able to smile again," Montgomery said.

"It's a dream come true," said Montgomery, who this week put the clinic to its first official test. It paid off.
"We found out there are things we didn't have, and that certain equipment isn't func-

developed and poorest provinces in the Philippines.
"I pulled more teeth in a month in Palawan than I'd extracted in some 32 years in the Air Force and in private practice," he said.